

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Office of the Secretary
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SECNAVINST 1754.1

OP-15

12 June 1984

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 1754.1

From: Secretary of the Navy
To: All Ships and Stations

Subj: Department of the Navy Family Service Center Program

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1752.3
(b) JAGINST 5800.7B
(c) SECNAVINST 5211.5C

1. Purpose. To establish Department of the Navy (DoN) policy and assign responsibility for the establishment and conduct of a Family Service Center Program.

2. Applicability. The provisions of this instruction apply to the active duty component of the Navy and the Marine Corps and their dependents and, on a space available basis, to others as provided in this instruction.

3. Background. A key consideration in maintaining combat readiness is the retention of trained, experienced Navy and Marine Corps personnel and enhancement of their ability to attend to duty with confidence in the welfare of their families. Each year the Department of the Navy loses many of its valuable members because of family considerations. These include prolonged family separations, frequent relocations, and resulting stresses on family life in overseas locations. This makes it necessary to strengthen and expand, on a department-wide basis, programs and services to assist Navy and Marine Corps personnel and their families in meeting the special challenges of a naval life in the naval tradition of "taking care of our own."

4. Policy. It is Department of the Navy policy to establish a network of Family Service Centers (FSC) at designated installations to provide reliable and useful information, referral, resources and assistance that aid Navy and Marine Corps personnel and their families in maintaining a sound personal and family life in the service. The FSC Program will, without duplicating services:

a. Maintain close liaison with service-related programs and services including health care, legal, chaplain, housing referral, family advocacy, drug and alcohol, ombudsman services, educational services offices, recreational services, spouse organizations, the Navy Relief Society, service credit unions, American Red Cross, United Services Organization and Armed Forces YMCA, and other military

service-related organizations in order to assist individuals seeking or requiring their services to obtain them.

b. Maintain liaison and coordination with state, county, and local community services or human resources offices and, when necessary, with other local community programs that provide recreational services, educational services, employment assistance, relocation assistance, housing referral, financial planning and counseling, career counseling, personal, family and marital counseling, family planning, special education, drug and alcohol treatment, health care and rehabilitative services and consumer services, in order to assist individuals seeking or requiring such services to obtain them. Referrals of personnel to civilian health care sectors will not be made without the express approval of the local military health care treatment facility.

c. Work to develop needed capabilities for service to military personnel and families within those military and civilian support programs.

d. Engage as many naval personnel and their families as possible in supporting the tradition of "taking care of our own" by using volunteers to the maximum extent feasible in FSC operations.

5. Program Guidance. Family Service Centers will be established, as program resources permit, at locations where the coordination of family support and assistance functions will benefit from such formalized management, as authorized by the Chief of Naval Operations or Commandant of the Marine Corps. Priority should be given to locations with large active duty populations, especially those subject to the disruptions of deployment and unit rotation.

a. Family Service Centers will be an organizational component of the designated installation or area coordinator and will work through the chain of command. FSCs will be subject to normal Navy and Marine Corps command inspection procedures.

b. Whenever feasible Family Service Centers should be co-located with related support services and organizations such as chaplains offices, legal services, Navy Relief Society, American Red Cross, Education Service Offices, Housing Referral Offices, etc.

6. Family Service Center Program Functions. The FSC Program is to provide support and assistance to commands and existing command-sponsored personal and family

support programs to take care of their own. FSCs have no functions in active duty human resource development. Within this guidance, FSC Program functions are to provide:

a. Information and Referral. The primary function of the FSC is to provide information and effective referral for services and resources available in the military and civilian communities for single and married servicemembers and their families. Family Service Centers will have available information on health care resources, personal and family and marital counseling, relocation assistance, housing referrals, child care resources, legal assistance, financial counseling and assistance, employment assistance, education resources, religious services and pastoral counseling, recreational services, consumer services and other personal and family support services. An essential element in effective referral is initial assessment of individual and family problems to determine what resources are needed to resolve the issues.

b. Family Assistance. The family assistance function directly supports the information and referral component of the FSC. Family assistance will be based on the following criteria: maximum use of existing resources (both military and civilian) and non-duplication; flexible and prompt responses to individual and command requests for family assistance; economical use of FSC assets; and quality assurance. Family assistance specialists will provide basic assessment of individual and family problems to determine resources needed and to provide appropriate support and referral information. This assistance will emphasize maximum use of existing community (military and civilian) resources to ensure that families and commands receive the most informative and flexible response to a problem situation. The level of family assistance provided at FSCs will be consistent with staff competency and guidance contained herein. At least one family assistance specialist will be trained and certified to perform assessment counseling for appropriate referral. The basic training and certification requirements for such individuals shall be established and applied consistently throughout the FSC system. Periodic evaluations will be made of each family assistance specialist's performance, to ensure that a high quality of service is being provided to FSC users.

c. Family Education Programs. FSCs will work to ensure the availability of educational programs designed to assist families in meeting the special challenges of military family life. These programs will address such areas as intra-family communication, relationships, parenting skills, coping with frequent moves, consumerism for the military lifestyle, and personal and family financial education. The

primary sources of such programs are chaplains offices, legal staffs, health care staffs, Navy Relief staffs, service credit union staffs, and local civilian organizations. Available FSC facilities may be offered to encourage on-post delivery of such programs. When adequate capability cannot be developed within such programs, FSC in-house services may supplement them. FSCs will not duplicate these services.

d. Financial Education Counseling, and Planning. FSCs will ensure the availability of information and assistance concerning personal and family financial planning and budgeting. The orientation of such information and assistance will be towards preventing financial problems. FSCs will work closely with Navy Relief Society, service credit unions, Cooperative Home Extension Program, American Red Cross and other community agencies in support of this function. Individuals and families seeking assistance in financial or estate planning will be referred to service credit unions, legal services offices, community agencies and services with financial counseling capability. When adequate capability cannot be developed from such sources, FSC in-house service may be provided only by fully trained personnel, whether employees or volunteers.

e. Deployment. FSCs will work to ensure the availability of information and personal and family support assistance to members and their families before, during and after deployment.

f. Family Advocacy. The FSC role in the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is limited to preventive information and education and referral within program guidelines in reference (a). FSCs will:

(1) Coordinate with FAP staff, information and training programs which increase the awareness of personnel and their families about family advocacy matters.

(2) Maintain a close working relationship with personnel designated to participate in the Family Advocacy Program at the local levels, such as health care, Family Advocacy Representative (FAR), legal services, chaplain, child/adult protective services, military law enforcement services, base security, and housing representatives. The purpose of maintaining a close working relationship is to enable the FSC to provide appropriate referral for individuals expressing problems which may require Family Advocacy Program intervention.

(3) Ensure that at least one FSC staff member has the requisite training and certification (paragraph 6n of reference (a)) to evaluate and make the appropriate

referral of family abuse or neglect cases presenting themselves to the FSC.

(4) The servicing military health care treatment facility may locate their Family Advocacy counseling personnel, either direct or contract personnel, programmed under reference (a) at the FSC when it serves FAP objectives to do so. They must be included in the Health Care Treatment Facility's Quality Assurance/Risk Management Program and credentialed under that facility's Credentials Program.

g. Special Needs Families. These include, but are not limited to the following: families with handicapped children or spouses, foreign born spouses, single parents and couples in which both partners are military service-members. FSCs will provide information and referral on schools for special education and the gifted, community services for the handicapped and other resources for special needs families, and seek to develop appropriate services, within existing military and civilian support programs.

h. Employment Assistance. FSCs will ensure availability of information to spouses seeking employment. Special attention will be focused on the needs of spouses who are seeking employment as a result of the naval sponsor's change of duty station.

i. Relocation Assistance. FSCs will ensure the ready availability of current "Welcome Aboard" packets from other Navy or Marine Corps commands. These will be available to active duty naval personnel and their families for use in gaining an understanding of the installation(s) to which they may be transferred.

j. Legal Referral. Individuals and families coming to FSCs with legal problems will be referred to the base legal services office for assistance within the program guidelines in reference (b) or further referral to competent civilian legal assistance. FSCs shall not refer individuals or families to civilian counsel. Legal services office personnel should refer individuals or families to FSCs if a problem emerges for which an FSC might be able to provide information or referral.

k. Religious and Pastoral Counseling. Chaplains may be assigned to FSCs to provide pastoral counseling as a part of the command religious ministries program, under the supervision of the command chaplain. Command chaplains will serve as advisors to FSC directors on matters of religious ministry programming, pastoral counseling services and chaplains utilization.

l. Health Care Services. Clinical psychology services, health care related social work services, family and marital therapy and similar counseling and treatment services are, in the DoN, an integral part of the continuum of health care. The local Navy health care treatment facility command will program for such services to meet identified requirements. Personnel programmed for such services may be assigned to FSCs when it is advantageous to do so but remain staff members of the local Navy health care treatment facility command. They must be included in that command's Quality Assurance/Risk Management Program, and credentialed under that command's Credentials Program. Similarly any contracts for needed health care services or personnel shall be the responsibility of that commanding officer. Referral of personnel from FSCs to civilian providers of health care services may be made only with the approval of the local Navy health care treatment facility command.

7. Confidentiality. Many of the kinds of individual and family problems that may be revealed when people seek information, referral or counseling from an FSC are intensely personal, can be embarrassing, and in some cases can place social acceptance, or the professional standing and career progression of naval personnel, at risk. This requires that information about people received in the program be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. All personnel involved in FSC activities must ensure careful, sensitive handling of case information. The success of the program depends in part on building confidence in the privacy of personal matters revealed in seeking assistance. All records, except statistical records where individual identity cannot be determined, shall be maintained and protected within the rules of the Privacy Act in FSC records management systems established by the CNO and CMC in accordance with reference (c) and this instruction. FSCs must have the client execute a Privacy Act Statement prior to each collection of information it requires, and advise the client about the uses of that information.

8. Eligibility for FSC Program Services. The following personnel are eligible for FSC services, subject to any restrictions in status of forces agreements at overseas activities:

a. Active duty members of the Navy and Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and their legal dependents.

b. Members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard selected reserve components while on extended active duty for training, and their legal dependents.

c. Spouses and legal dependents of prisoners of war or missing in action (POW/MIA) personnel of all armed services.

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d. Under reciprocal agreements among the services, active duty members of the Army and the Air Force and their legal dependents.

e. On a space available basis, retired members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard and their legal dependents, widows, widowers and the dependents of members who were on active duty or retired at the time of death. Under reciprocal agreement among the services, retired members of the Army and Air Force and their legal dependents, on a space available basis.

f. On a space available basis at overseas activities, non-foreign hire civilian employees of the Department of Defense and their dependents for services which are not available in the local community.

9. Responsibilities. The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) will:

a. Establish Family Service Center Programs consistent with the policy and program guidance in this instruction.

b. Provide guidance and assistance to commanding officers and activity heads to ensure effective execution of the FSC Program.

c. Provide fiscal and personnel resources from appropriated funds necessary to carry out the essentials of the Family Service Center Program. Ensure that adequate counseling personnel to meet at least identified active duty requirements are programmed in the Navy health care system and dedicated to family programs contained herein. For purposes of departmental uniformity and economy, ensure maximum coordination and cooperation between

Navy and Marine Corps programs, including staff and administrative support proportional to the active duty Navy and Marine Corps populations being served.

d. Ensure that the effects of FSC Programs are systematically documented to build a knowledge base to guide future policy and resource decisions relating to program elements and to the categories of eligible personnel.

e. Establish procedures consistent with paragraph 7 and reference (c) to protect the privacy of active duty personnel and others from disclosure of personal or potentially embarrassing information, with particular emphasis on financial, medical and family advocacy matters.

f. Provide a Family Service Center Program manager to represent the DoN at DoD level meetings and at interdepartmental meetings such as those with the Department of Health and Human Services. These representatives may not commit the DoN to changes in policy or program. Keep the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASN(M&RA)) informed of actions considered by such groups which would modify or impact upon DoN policy and guidance in this instruction.

g. Provide an annual evaluation to the ASN(M&RA) by 15 November of each year on the effectiveness of the FSC Program in meeting the purposes and guidelines in this instruction, and program or policy changes needed to meet basic policy objectives.

CHAPMAN B. COX
Assistant Secretary of the Navy
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

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